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# THE CALL OF SORROW

## A POEM OF DESTINY

ROBERTS

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## A POEM OF DESTINY

BY
CHARLES V. H. ROBERTS

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No 1

TO THE MEMORY OF
MY AUNT
EMILIE DE MUN SMITH

## THE CALL OF SORROW

ELOVED! In thine adversity there is
Not one will call thee friend. When mortal heart
Beats outward for the healing touch, the little
Things for its easing never come. Sorrow
Is an Exile, which hath no portion in the time
And tale and scorching brain of selfishness.

F thou hast webs of laughter and dangling gold,
Or credit on the rich man's scroll writ deep,
And in thy house a sense of feasts and affectation
Unconfessed, —then thou hast many friends;
Thy life goes on with splendid tendence;
Thou art a shepherdess in the golden lights.

UT a sudden pause in entertainment, its glows
And sighs and wines and visions delicate;
Or hearken with thy gifts and jewels and favorite
Robes, dazzling the longest corridors;
Then thou shalt be with less friends, — lingering
In the sunlight, but each remembering.

ET Sorrow come, — the doorway of thy soul
Flung open to the storm of life's great pain, —
Then thou must win another friend;
Mad and knowing all, thy lords of pleasure
Flash and elsewhere seek; thou art solitary,
Untended, comfortless, and yet — not ended.

Spirit of Sorrow! with such majestic certainty
Dost thou come in on all things human;
Thy august angel before the compact of
Our life was signed, breathed far off in star-dust:
Then our spirits quickened by the Word
Of God, conceived and met thee. For a time,
We, clothed in mortal raiment, swoon to thy
Bemoaning reeds and deepest chords of misery.

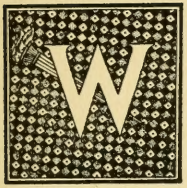
ELOVED, thy stirring bosom is besieged with grief,
Sad sea-horizons of sorrow mystical,
With wounds no human hand can ever close,
Until thy soul beyond the ocean, weary, rests.
Thy tear, — each tear a solitaire, a pearl
That vainly shimmers on the crimson reef
Of pain, — for a setting in the ring of Sympathy!

OSE Health, — thy gold will twine in loneliness;
Thy most cherished arms that weaved about thy strength,
In weakness waver; petals o'er-blown fly
On the wind away to stronger stems. If thou
Art ill, ill unto death, a mother's love
Alone will shine, — that unadorned, profound,
Unselfish love. The deeper falls the darkness
Of thy life, the brighter is its calm
Enduring warmth. Forever half in lightning
And in gloom, the maternal star in brilliance
Unafraid grows stronger in the firmament of Sorrow.

H! If we could be the things we are,
And not the things we have! Our chattels,
Gold, and songs are in themselves a nothingness,
A glow that has a wasting flame, and yet
Without, we are but ashes, — living limbs,
Wordless, handless, helpless, friendless,
Groping for the spirit of Companionship.

FT Sorrow, art thou Victory, crowned in poverty,
In fallen fortunes and the emptiness of aid;
A tale of bitterness on barren stone,
Those pangs of pain and utter deprivation,
The flesh in sighs of jealousy composed;
To reach and grasp and suffer for the joys
Of life, — those wistful, dreamful joys of life
Attained by luxury only. Feebly, step
By step, the roaming of these starving souls
Casts a shadow for a moment; then
Unassuaged they soar away unto Oblivion.

Talisman of Sorrow, winged through aeons
From the thunder of a Self-existent
Mind! — groan and cry in the anguish
Of the angels mutinied; in human bodies
Broken, torn and mangled on the arenas
Of Roman persecution; in the twilight of battle fields,
Woman's shame and man's hypocrisy,
Unpraised achievement, kindred disappointment,
Memoried achings, bitter tragic losses.



ITH thine august mournful smile, what art
Thou Sorrow, — thy sunset strangely pathetic o'er
The world's most splendid lives; thy grief, regret,
The vague centennials of thy shame? To saint
And sin alike, thou dost cohere,
Though weary is the heart within thy breast.
Oh! Why does thy bleeding compact cover all?

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